



Jesus is discernable only with the help and blessing of the Holy Spirit, “the Helper.” (Today’s reading: John 14:15-21)

This past week I was involved in an auto accident. It was a freak accident and it was entirely my own fault. I was stunned and a little surprised. Climbing out of the car Caren asked if I was alright, when I responded that I was, she gave out a “thank God” just as I had when I unbuckled my seatbelt. That I came out of it entirely uninjured was an act of grace.

“What’s God got to do with it?” That’s what an atheist might respond. “That you weren’t killed was sheer luck.”

Jesus said, *“The world will see me no more, but you will see me.”*

Why do you suppose that is? Has it ever occurred to you that the God and Jesus we worship and often take for granted—that his presence is not obvious to everyone? There is a whole subculture of people who do not believe in God—to whom God is not evident. The more radical nonbelievers have made a religion of saying there is no God: they are the atheists. There is another group who are nothing, who might even acknowledge the existence of God but don’t care one way or the other.

I’ll put the question before you again, “Why is that we see God in every corner of the creation and they do not?”

It has everything to do with ‘the Helper.’ The Helper, more readily known as the Holy Spirit, enables you to see God and discern his presence in the world. The powerful and comforting Holy Spirit lifted up Stephen’s eyes to heaven as those rocks come hurling down upon him, he was able to see the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God.

Stephen saw Jesus! I’m sure the scientifically minded can give a cool and logical explanation to the phenomena of religious or spiritual visions. But there is something beautiful, if not blessed in dying with God, the Lamb and the angels in sight. Isn’t that how we all want to enter heaven?

In the film *NATIONAL TREASURE*, Nicholas Cage is able to read the Declaration of

Independence's secrets only with the help of special glasses. Its lenses worked like the 3-D glasses they give you at the movies. Without them you can't discern the answer hidden under the text of the document. Without them you haven't got a clue to where the treasure is hidden.

This morning's truth is that the faith which is so obvious to us, is not discernable to the world by and large. Jesus Christ; we know him to be the Way, the Truth and the Light. He is discernable and we see him. He is *discerned* (seen, worshiped, loved, believed in, understood, served, known) in the world by Christians, all with the help and the aid of the Holy Spirit—he is our Helper. The Spirit is our lens.

The Ap. Paul tells us, "*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*" (1 Cor. 2:14) To understand God you need the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is not just *a comforter*, he is all that, but he is also our Helper. He enables us to read and interpret the scriptures correctly and with clarity (14:26). Likewise, the Spirit helps us to see (discern) God, if not Christ, in the day to day happenings of life.

The Spirit of God, the Spirit of life, the comforting Helper, enables us to see God at work in life and in world events. ***I am not saying*** that the Bible is written in any kind of code, or that any one person has the answer to every question. There is no code in the Bible. There is nothing hidden in scripture that you cannot learn: there is no secret in the Bible only for the elect. What God has to say to you he says clearly to all people. It's just some of us listen and open our hearts, others don't.

That being said, "if you have eyes (ears) to see," you will see great and wonderful truths with amazing clarity. There are some teachings that with the aid of the Holy Spirit become clearer than crystal. In Boy Scouts I learned how to read a map, the difference between major paved roads and dirt roads, topographical lines, railroad lines, hiking paths, major buildings, etc... Once you have the key it's all so clear. The Holy Spirit is the key.

When it comes to God we know that "*he wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (1Tim 2:4) However, the human situation is such that because of our sins we are blind when it comes to seeing spiritual things. The devil causes us to be deaf when it comes to discerning God's voice in the competing voices in our culture. In the same way we are usually mute when we should

be speaking for him and bearing witness to the things of Jesus.

Unwittingly we are Satan's *slaves*. That word is a bit strong. But Jesus said it, "*If anyone commits sin, he is a slave to sin.*" (John 8:34) Paul concurs, "*we are carnal, sold under sin.*" (Rom 7:14) Through the cross our Lord has us free. He has given us his liberating Holy Spirit—the Spirit to see, to hear, speak and power to act. He has given us new life in Christ. "You know him because he dwells in you."

Jesus also said, "*apart from you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5)

Jesus asks God on our behalf for the gift of the Holy Spirit. So, if there is any change in heart, conversion, a "being born again," it is because God changes us; God working through Gospel with his life-changing Holy Spirit. Through him Jesus has made himself known, manifested himself, to us.

I truly wish that others could see what I see; could believe in God as I do and even him more perfectly. I can wish for it. It is better that I pray for it. Let us each be grateful for the gift of faith we do have, the ability to see and discern God in our lives. And, let us labor as God gives us strength to make Jesus present to all we know and meet.

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